American Diabetes Association.
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SUPPORT

HOUSE BILLS 4616, 4617, 4618
MI Stem Cell Research Legislation

The American Diabetes Association, representing over 20 million Americans, including nearly 600,000 adults and one in every 523 children with diabetes in Michigan, *supports* House Bills 4616, 4617 & 4618 sponsored by Representatives Meisner and Meadows. Stem Cell Research holds great promise in the search to find a cure for Diabetes as well as other costly and deadly diseases and conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Cancer, Heart Disease, Stroke, Arthritis, Burns, ALS, and Spinal Cord Injuries.

Embryonic stem cells are made available for research from infertile couples who have excess fertilized eggs in storage at fertility clinics that would otherwise be discarded as medical waste. There are tens of thousands of these fertilized eggs available for research and nearly half of infertile couples say they would like to see some good come from their unused fertilized eggs. In addition, independent opinion surveys over the past two years show strong public support and surprisingly strong backing from Fundamentalist Christians, Catholics and abortion opponents in favor of embryonic stem cell research. In fact, United States Senator Orrin Hatch, a leading, outspoken abortion opponent stated in his biography "[embryonic stem cell] research is fundamentally different, scientifically, legally, and morally from abortion. Supporting it is both pro-life and pro-family." Some scientists consider embryonic stem cells to offer distinct advantages over other forms of stem cell research because they can be grown in a lab indefinitely and are pluripotent, meaning they may develop into any cell in the body such as an insulin producing cell, a muscle cell or a brain cell.

Adult stem cells are stem cells that can be derived from different body tissue, namely bone marrow, blood and the brain and, accordingly, have different properties. Although much information has been developed, scientists still do not understand their specific properties well. Adult stem cells have been used successfully in certain therapies such as treating blood cancers. However, more research is needed to learn how to use these cells to restore or replace damaged tissue or organs.

Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) is sometimes referred to as therapeutic "cloning", and therein lies much of the misunderstanding and resulting controversy on this issue. SCNT is the transplanting of a patient's own DNA into an *unfertilized* egg in order to grow stem cells that offer life saving potential. The promise of SCNT is that the patient's body would accept these cells as its own because they are derived from its own DNA. Therefore the patient would not be at risk of rejection and would not require immunosuppressive drug therapy. SCNT does not involve sperm and does not involve transplanting any cells into a womb. In short SCNT does not create people, but could save peoples lives.

The American Diabetes Association believes that embryonic stem cell research, adult stem cell research and SCNT hold enormous promise for the development of new therapies for treating Diabetes and other devastating diseases and that it is important to pursue all lines of research simultaneously.

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